Flu vaccine falling short

Figures show it's 25% effective against main strain of illness this year. – National, 4A

Marvel superhero roars

With Chadwick Boseman in the lead, *Black Panther* pounces on pop culture. – Style, 1E

Arkansas Democrat Gazette

ARKANSAS' NEWSPAPER

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In the news

■ **Micky Hammon**, 60, the former Republican majority leader of the Alabama House, was sentenced to three months in federal prison and ordered to reimburse campaign donors $51,000 after pleading guilty to using campaign funds for personal expenses in 2017.

■ **Tyler Tannahill**, a Republican congressional candidate in Kansas, said he's sticking with plans to raffle an AR-15 rifle to raise funds for his campaign, even though authorities said a similar style of weapon was used in this week's shooting at a Florida high school.

■ **Devin Custalow**, 25, of New York City, waited for nearly 30 minutes for the mystery man with yellow shoes she met in October on a subway train, but he never arrived at the billboard she used to ask him to meet her at 1 p.m. on Valentine's Day.

■ **Margo Davidson**, 55, a Pennsylvania lawmaker, is facing charges that, while driving a taxpayer-funded car with a suspended license, she left the scene after rear-ending a car in January and hit another vehicle in February when she pulled out of a driveway, state police said.

■ **Malcolm Turnbull**, Australia's prime minister, has barred government ministers from having sexual relations with their staff members after news surfaced that his deputy, Barnaby Joyce, had an affair with a former spokesman, who is now expecting a baby.

■ **Janizia Ross**, 17, who served an in-school suspension at a high school in Alexandria, Ala., for asking her girlfriend to the prom, said school officials are now saying they can go as a couple after Lambda Legal, an advocate for same-sex rights, complained about the punishment.

■ **Raymond Barlow**, 29, of Westfield, Vt., faces fines of more than $700 after wildlife officials said he illegally transported two young lizards into the state, including a dwarf caiman, which can grow to more than 5 feet long, and a water monitor, which can reach 6 feet in length.

■ **Matthew Wade**, sheriff of Calhoun County, Ala., called a female day care worker "a hero" for preventing a gunman, who was later arrested, from entering the facility when he tried to take his 1-year-old daughter.

■ **Conner Shelton**, 18, of Lancaster, Pa., who attends the University of Delaware, filed to become the seventh teen to run for Kansas governor, calling his candidacy "an experiment of sorts" in a state that doesn't have age or residency requirements for the office.

WEATHER

LITTLE ROCK

Today Showers early, turning cooler.

High 56, winds variable at 10 to 15 mph.

Tonight A chance of rain.

Low 40.

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AP/GERALD HERBERT

Veronica Laureano and her daughter, Zorayha, 11, attend a vigil Thursday at Parkland Baptist Church in Parkland, Fla., for victims of the shooting Wednesday at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

School shooting lasted 3 minutes, sheriff states

COMPILED BY DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF FROM WIRE REPORTS

PARKLAND, Fla. — The man accused of gunning down 17 people at a Florida high school admitted to law enforcement officials that he carried out one of the nation's deadliest school shootings, authorities said in court papers filed Thursday.

Nikolas Cruz, 19, was arraigned and charged Thursday with 17 counts of premeditated murder in Wednesday's attack.

Cruz told investigators that he shot students in the hallways and on the grounds of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, north of Miami, a report from the Broward County sheriff's office says. Cruz also told investigators that he carried loaded magazines of ammunition to the school and kept them in his backpack until he got on campus, the report says.

Cruz

Sheriff Scott Israel said the gunman fired into five classrooms — four on the first floor and one on the second floor. The shooting lasted three minutes.

When he was done shooting, he went to the third floor and dropped his AR-15 rifle and the backpack containing the ammunition, Israel said. He then ran out of the build-

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GUN DEBATE little changed in Congress. Page 7A.

Senate derails proposals on immigration

Bipartisan bill, Trump bid fail to get 60 votes needed

DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — The Republican-led Senate on Thursday blocked both President Donald Trump's immigration plan and a bipartisan alternative, a failure that cast doubt on whether Congress will ever resolve the fate of hundreds of thousands of young illegal aliens known as Dreamers.

In a series of afternoon votes, senators failed to muster enough votes for a Republican plan backed by Trump that would have granted legal status to 1.8 million of the young people and spent at least $25 billion to bolster security along the U.S.-Mexico border. It also would have made changes to family-based legal migration programs and ended a diversity lottery system used by immigrants from smaller countries.

The vote for that plan, offered by Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, was 39-60 — well short of the 60 yes votes needed to move ahead.

AP/J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE

Singling out White House adviser Stephen Miller, Sen. Lindsey Graham on Thursday criticized "some crazy people" for causing the defeat of bipartisan immigration legislation.

The Senate also couldn't produce enough votes for a bipartisan plan that would legalize the same number of illegal aliens and appropriate $25 billion for southern border security construction projects over the next

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Trump travel ban dealt a blow from 2nd appeals court

Unconstitutional, ruling says, citing anti-Muslim bias of president's words

COMPILED BY DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF FROM WIRE REPORTS

A second federal appeals court on Thursday struck down President Donald Trump's latest version of the immigrant travel ban, saying it "is unconstitutionally tainted with animus toward Islam."

The 9-4 decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit in Richmond, Va., took a deep dive into Trump's statements and tweets since he became president and concluded that the third iteration of his proclamation, like the first two, was motivated not by national security concerns but by antipathy toward Muslims.

"The government's proffered rationale for the proclamation lies at odds with the statements of the president himself," wrote Chief Judge Roger Gregory.

"Plaintiffs here do not just plausibly allege with particularity that the proclamation's purpose is driven by anti-Muslim bias, they offer undisputed evidence of such bias: the words of the president."

The ruling, upholding an injunction by a federal judge in Maryland barring enforcement of the travel ban, has no immediate effect. The Supreme Court is already scheduled to decide the legality of the travel ban, holding oral arguments in April and deciding by the term's

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Agent's account dubious, court told

Dismissal urged in kickback case

DOUG THOMPSON
NWA DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

FAYETTEVILLE — The government's own attorneys said Thursday that they don't believe the reason given by their chief investigator for why he wiped the memory of a computer used to gather evidence in the corruption case of former state Sen. Jon Woods.

U.S. District Judge Timothy Brooks will issue an order at a later date on whether to dismiss the kickback case over the destroyed evidence, he said after a hearing Thursday on the defense motion.

Brooks asked government attorneys during the hearing if they found it credible that FBI special agent Robert Cessario wiped the hard drive because he had used the laptop to download personal medical records that he wanted to keep private.

"No, your honor," Assistant U.S. Attorney Aaron Jennen replied. "That reason sounds like burning down a house because you don't like the drapes."

Still, the judge should not assume Cessario's reason was to conceal evidence in this case, Jennen argued. Defense attorneys coun-

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Bannon tight-lipped

AP/J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE

Former top White House strategist Steve Bannon arrives Thursday on Capitol Hill for questioning by the House Intelligence Committee in its investigation of Russian meddling in the 2016 election. Bannon presented a list of 25 questions he would be willing to answer, all reportedly scripted by the White House and all with the answer "no." House GOP leaders were considering further steps to force him to cooperate. *Article, 4A*

State panel backs LISA plans for new campus

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BENJAMIN KRAIN

Bethany Ratermann, elementary school principal at LISA Academy-North charter school, gives a thumbs up Thursday to parent Valerie Martin (left), Assistant Superintendent Luanne Baroni and high school Principal Yagmyr Berdimyradov after the state Charter Authorizing Panel's vote.

Increasing rolls by 600 gets nod

CYNTHIA HOWELL
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

A proposal by LISA Academy Public Charter Schools to add a secondary-school campus in Sherwood and increase its enrollment cap for all of its schools by 600 students to 2,700 won unanimous approval Thursday from the state's Charter Authorizing Panel.

The expansion plan from the state's largest charter school system will now go to the Arkansas Board of Education on March 8 for final action. The Education Board has the authority to accept the charter panel's decision or conduct a hearing on the plan — either on

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